

# LEARNING IN THE NINTH–TENTH CENTURY *SLAVIA ORTHODOXA*

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## Introduction

Literacy is one of the important constituents of medieval culture within the frames of the Latin and the Orthodox Christendom. The transition from the ancient cultural model to the medieval one in both Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox manifestations has been viewed as both continuity and innovation in the sphere of literacy. The methods and goal of learning have been investigated and emphasized in the works of literary critics, anthropologists, and historians.

The problem of literacy and education in the newly Christianized states in the early Middle Ages still remains insufficiently studied, the main reason being the lack or scarcity of primary sources. In the Balkans the deficiency of primary sources to educational activity among the Southern Slavs has discouraged scholars from investigating this particular problem. In an attempt to change this situation, this contribution investigates the Bulgarian cultural practices related to learning and literacy.

The strategy adopted here is juxtaposing different kinds of sources: the evidence of hagiography, where the narrative reveals the function and role of learning in the Christian world, and the evidence of such phenomena as Greek and Glagolitic *abecedaria* graffito-inscriptions. Generally, the sources present, more implicitly than explicitly, some learning practices in the form of memorizing, reading, teaching, and training. Beside the fact that the sources vary in genre and function, they also provide textual and archeological data for the purpose of this historical-cultural analysis.

What I argue here is that learning was a significant part of the catechetical process and cannot be separated from it. In the particular historical and cultural situation of the Balkans in the ninth and the tenth century, the practice of learning letters and instructing in faith simultaneously was a way of adapting Christian culture quickly to the needs of the Slavs. Although it is difficult to say to what extent the Slavic educational activity differed from contemporary Byzantine practices, it is sure that the Slavs had the Greek example as a model and they were able either to accept or to challenge it.

## Acquiring Literacy

The newly invented Slavic alphabet became the main device for acquiring literacy: the pragmatic and sacred character of this new graphic system found its way into the political life of Byzantium and Bulgaria. The evidence of learning the alphabet is found in both textual and archeological sources: alphabetical acrostics and *abecedaria* graffito-inscriptions from Ravna and Preslav, the north-eastern part of Bulgaria. The alphabetical acrostics, Glagolitic and Cyrillic, found in liturgical and non-liturgical tradition (as the *Alphabetical Prayer*, for example) can be examined in the light of functional literacy—serving as a mnemothechnical device for learning the alphabet. This is a hypothesis which takes into account the presence of acrostics in sixteenth and seventeenth-century primers, as well as the modern practice of learning the alphabet through alphabetical-like acrostics.

The two types of the Slavonic acrostics are letter- and word acrostics; the former provided techniques for memorizing the alphabet based on learning the elements (graphemes and phonemes) of the alphabet in a specific order. This particular use of the acrostics as teaching-aid resembles the characteristics of *schedographia*,<sup>1</sup> namely, memorizing words and forms alphabetically. The fact that medieval culture was to a great extent based on memorization,<sup>2</sup> also supports such an idea, although the actual procedure of using the acrostics is still unclear. The second dimension of the acrostics reflects its semantic function;<sup>3</sup> in the case of hymnography, it also tests the ability of the reader to find out the sequence of the letters of the alphabet. Using the full names of the letters is a feature of the Greek *abecedaria* from Ravna monastery.<sup>4</sup> The lack of the semantic dimension in this case is due to the peculiarities of the Greek alphabetical sequence where word-acrostics are impossible. In this re-

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<sup>1</sup> About the popular method of *schedographia* which flourished in Byzantium, see the reference in Boris Uspenskij, *Istorija russkogo literaturnogo jazyka (XI–XVIII vv.)* (History of the Russian literary language, from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries) (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1988), 41; and in Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur von Justinian bis zum Ende des Oströmischen Reiches (527–1453)* (München: C. H. Beck Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1897), 590–3, who gives a brief description of this method together with source quotations. The main texts used as a basis for this method are prayers, hymns as well as some works from “Profanautoren” as Philostratos and Agapetos.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge–New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Roland Marti, “Texte mit Alphabet-Akrostichon in der kirchenslavische Tradition,” *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 42.2 (1997), 129, 133; and Jolanta Darčevska, “Starinnye slavjanskije azbuki i bukvari: k voprosu o edinoj istorii drevneslavjanskago literaturnago jazyka v areale ‘greko-slavjanskago mira’” (Old Slavonic alphabets and primers: concerning the question of common history of Old Slavonic literary language in the “Greek-Slavonic world”), *Sovetskoe slavjanovedenie* 4 (1979), 62.

<sup>4</sup> Kazimir Popkonstantinov, “Dvuezlični nadpisi i abezedari ot starobălgarskija manastir do s. Ravna, Varnenski okrăg” (Bilingual inscriptions and abecedars from the Old Bulgarian monastery near Ravna, the Varna area), *Bulletin du Musée National de Varna* 20 (1984): 65–83.



spect, the *abecedaria* differ from the Slavonic word-type acrostics where the letters of the alphabet organize a text with its own meaning and message.<sup>5</sup>

Learning by heart finds its way also into the early liturgical practice of the Bulgarians. The archeological material from Preslav, a writing tablet with a bilingual text of morning and evening προκείμενα and instructions for their use during certain days of the week, combines writing and perhaps also translation exercises with liturgical training.<sup>6</sup>

Psalms and liturgical information for their use were also discovered among the Ravna findings: a bilingual evening προκείμενον from Psalm 53 along with the name of ΚΛΗΜΕΝΤΟΣ ΠΑΠΑ ΡΟΜΗΣ and a Greek text derived from Psalm 144.<sup>7</sup> If Popkonstantinov's hypothesis that "the scribe must have written this text from memory and not by dictation"<sup>8</sup> is considered plausible, then the practice of writing verses from the Psalter on tablets appears to be common with the Latin West. There it probably originated in the monastic milieu and has later found its way also into schools and private teaching.

Theodore the Studite's remarks on writing with *styla* on wax tablets may be mentioned as another example of learning practice in the Orthodox world.<sup>9</sup> However, there is no textual evidence in Bulgaria which presents instructions of how to learn in such an explicit form. Nevertheless, it has been assumed on the basis of such archeological finds as *styla* that the method of *schedographia* was used in Bulgarian educational practice.<sup>10</sup> One thing this hypothesis does not take into account is the different purposes of *schedographia* as a technique, in terms of writing ἐπιμερισμοί, thoroughly analyzing a text, or just practising orthography.

An interesting source that deals with the difficult process of learning the alphabet is an apocryphal incantation: *ЕГДА ОУЧИ КТО КНИГА И НЕ МОЖЕ ПРЪЕМАТИ* (when somebody is learning to read and has difficulties).<sup>11</sup> As "low-brow literature"

<sup>5</sup> The magic and sacred functions of the alphabet is another important issue to be discussed but it is not of relevance for this topic.

<sup>6</sup> Stojan Petrov and Xristo Kodov, *Starobălgarski muzikalni pametnici* (Old Bulgarian musical records) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1976), 27.

<sup>7</sup> See Kazimir Popkonstantinov, "Za dva pametnika ot 9–10 vek s psaltirni tekstove ot Ravna" (About two inscriptions with Psalter texts from the ninth–tenth centuries from Ravna), in *Prinosi kăm bălgarskata arxeologija*, vol.1 (Sofia: Arges, 1992), 113–9.

<sup>8</sup> As support for this opinion, he considers some slight differences in the Greek text in comparison with the text of the Septuagint: Popkonstantinov, "Za dva pametnika," 117. The practice of dictating texts was popular both in the West and in the East as a teaching method and writing practice.

<sup>9</sup> Pavel Georgiev, "Starobălgarski pisala ot Pliska i Preslav" (Old Bulgarian *styla* from Pliska and Preslav), *Arxeologija* 3 (1980): 43–50.

<sup>10</sup> This is a hypothesis of Georgiev, "Starobălgarski pisala," 48.

<sup>11</sup> The text has been published by Anisava Miltenova, "Sbornik săs smeseno sădăržanie, delo na Ertropolskija knižovnik jeromonax Daniil" (Miscellany of the monk Daniil from Etropole), *Starobălgarska literatura* 9

this text interprets freely the motif of learning through devouring an object which in this case appears to be an apple. This motif has its explicit Biblical models in the Revelation of John (10:8–11) where it is connected with the idea of the gift of prophesy<sup>12</sup> and in the Book of Ezekiel (2:8–10; 3:1–3), in the Psalter (119:103), and in the Book of Jeremiah (15:16). The motif of devouring a book, attested in the Byzantine tradition, passed into Slavonic literature, especially to the *apocrypha*, where it must have been contaminated by old pagan beliefs.<sup>13</sup> This text elucidates a perception of and proposes a technology for learning which makes it a rare instance in Slavic written tradition. The didactic purpose of the text is clearly disclosed in its content and structure although the actual use of the manuscript as a compendium of various texts remains unknown.

The textual and epigraphical material mentioned so far gives a glance at the very first stage of the process of education—learning the alphabet. An instrument of writing and reading, the Slavonic alphabet had something which the Greek alphabet lacked: its spiritual dimension as a way of salvation. This two-dimensional pattern of learning found its expression in the usage of the Psalter, the Gospel, and the Horologion in the monastic learning practice and everyday life. What gives additional support to this assumption is the role of the monastic *Typika* in the regulation of the monks' life. The *Typikon* of the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople is a perfect example of such monastic pedagogics in regard to the reading schedule and the habits of the monks. Chapters 28 and 36 provide data about the communal reading activity while chapters 26 and 33 give some indications of the private readings of the monks. There are some references in the Greek Life of Nicholas Studite about the learning curriculum obligatory for the monks: it included grammar (learning how to write correctly and how to read well), philosophical exercises, and learning by heart of the sayings of Church Fathers in order to argue with the heretics.<sup>14</sup>

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(1986): 114–25, who thinks that this work most probably was aimed to instruct its readers in the Christian morality, 122. Although the miscellany is very late, this text is dated to the eleventh-twelfth centuries, as the author kindly pointed out to me in a letter.

<sup>12</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Ralph Clemenston who shared this idea with me. About the biblical genealogy of this motif, see *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 610. About Byzantine counterparts, V. Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova, *Istoriko-apokaliptičnata knižnina vāv Vizantiia i v srednovekovna Bālgariia* (Historical-apocalyptic literature in Byzantium and medieval Bulgaria) (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sveti Kliment Ohridski," 1996), 314–5.

<sup>13</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova, *Istoriko-apokaliptičnata*, 314.

<sup>14</sup> Zinaida Samodurova, "K voprosu o suščestvovanii monastyrskix škol v Vizantii VIII–XII vv." (On the questions of existence of monastic schools in Byzantium in the eighth-twelfth centuries), *Vizantijskij vremennik* 56 (1995), 208.



Some scholars assume that the Stoudios *Typikon* was in use in the Bulgarian monasteries.<sup>15</sup> Even though there are not enough data available to prove this hypothesis, it is likely that this *Typikon* was authoritative for most of the Byzantine monasteries and became a model for their rules. The *Typikon* of Gregorios Pakourianos is the only example of monastic *Typika* found on Bulgarian territory.<sup>16</sup> The remarks in chapter 31 about the education of young boys in the monastery of St Nicholas refer to Greek and Georgian monks and follow in general the model of the Studite *Typikon*. It is said that the young boys (whose number should always be six) must be brought up and instructed in the wisdom of the Holy Scripture by an old man, usually one of the priests.<sup>17</sup> If they were good in learning when they reached the appropriate age, they were compelled to become priests. Those who were not worthy of the priesthood were expelled.<sup>18</sup>

The passage does not tell anything about the particular curriculum used in the educational process<sup>19</sup> and about the way this process was carried out. One hypothesis could be that the books for instruction were well known and there was no need to refer to them in this particular document. Another plausible idea is to assume the implementation of the Byzantine rules in Bačkov monastery which brings up once again the evidence of the Studite curriculum. The purpose of the training, however, is clear—it was aimed to prepare priests to meet the requirements of the monastery. The Life of Nicholas Studite points out to a similar type of school with the same purpose outside the walls of the Studite monastery which suggests that it must have been a common practice at this time in Byzantium. In the end, it is necessary to emphasize that the available sources do not allow a discussion about the educational

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the old but still valuable edition and commentary of the *Testament of Theodore The Studite* and the *Rule* of the monastery compiled by Ivan Gošev, ed., "Pravilata na Studijskija manastir: uvod, tekst, razsăzdenija" (The Rules of the Stoudios monastery: introduction, text, and commentary), *Godišnik na Sofijskija universitet, Bogoslovski fakultet* 6 (1939/40): 1–74, where comparing the text of the Slavonic *Euchologium Sinaiticum* and the text of the Stoudios *Typikon*, he makes comments about the use of this *Typikon* in the Bulgarian monasteries.

<sup>16</sup> This is the *Typikon* of Bačkov monastery (near present-day Plovdiv), founded by the Byzantine commander of Georgian origin, Georgios Pakourianos, in 1083. The *Typikon* was written in 1083 in Greek, Armenian, and Georgian. Although until the thirteenth century the monastery was mostly inhabited by Georgian monks, the *Typikon* can serve as a source of information about the level of monastic literacy on the Bulgarian territory at this time.

<sup>17</sup> The abbot of the monastery in the West had the same function, cf. John D. Baldwin, *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages: 1000–1300* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1971), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the text of the *Typikon* at the site of Dumbarton Oaks, <http://www.doaks.org/typ010.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> It might be assumed that the curriculum studied follows the one established by the Canons of the Church. Another source of data about teaching material is the *Legenda Bulgarica*: τὰ περὶ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν εὐκοσμίαν καὶ ὅσα τῶν Ψαλμωδῶν τε καὶ εὐχῶν ὑφηγούμενος, Alexander Milev, *Grăckite žitija na Kliment Oxridski. Uvod, tekst i objasnitelni beležki* (The Greek Vitae of Clement of Oxrid: introduction, texts, and commentaries) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1966), 130.

practice in *Slavia Orthodoxa* in modern terms. For this initial period of establishment of the Christian institutions, education was rather an instruction in Christian faith than secular schooling after classical models.

### Enlightenment Through Understanding: The Example of Slavonic Grammatical Works

The new graphic and semantic system—the Slavonic Written Word—described reality and God through the new concepts of enlightenment and salvation. In this respect, the practice of translation implied among the Slavs a linguistic and cultural shift from the traditions of the Greek model to another one with initially different social and spiritual dimensions. The level of understanding of Greek by Slavs is obscure; still, the possible language situation in the ninth and the tenth century can be described as follows:

1. a state of digraphia which arose from the use of the Greek graphic system in the process of creation of the Cyrillic alphabet. It is very likely that those people who knew the Greek alphabet did not know the Greek language. In other words, they had not reached the next level of literacy—that of using the written language.

2. a relationship between Greek and Old Church Slavonic as coexistence and later on, as a shift from one mental, grammatical, and graphic model to another<sup>20</sup>;

3. “*dignitas*,” the prestige of the new literary language relying on the use of a writing system completely new for both Bulgars and Slavs.<sup>21</sup> The question is whether Greek suddenly disappeared from all spheres of Bulgarian life after the Preslav Council in 893, or it was a gradual process due to the increasing role of more comprehensive and more functional Church Slavonic.<sup>22</sup>

A model of intellectual activity of the Slavs regarding the question of the two alphabets is found in the treatise “О писменехъ” (On the Letters) by Černorizec Xrabr where the theory of the creation of the Slavonic alphabet is expressed in a clearly ideological way, particularly focusing on the superiority of the Slavonic letters over the Greek ones. Thus the use of an act with non-political connotations, i.e. the creation of the alphabet for the purposes of a political ideology was

<sup>20</sup> The use of Greek and Latin *formulae* in Cyrillic inscriptions has been examined in the book of Stefan Smjadovski, *Bălgarska kirilska epigrafika 9–15 vek* (Bulgarian Cyrillic epigraphy: ninth to fifteenth centuries) (Sofia: Studia Classica, 1993), 39–81.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Fr. Thomson, “SS. Cyril and Methodius and a Mythical Western Heresy: Trilinguism: A Contribution to the Study of Patristic and Medieval Theories of Sacred Languages,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 110 (1992), 75.

<sup>22</sup> The opinion of Kazimir Popkonstantinov, “Razprostranenie na starobălgarskata pismenost prez 9–11 vek po epigrafski danni” (The spread of Old Bulgarian writing in the ninth–eleventh centuries according to the epigraphic data), *Starobălgarska literatura* 17 (1985), 65–7, is that in the administrative sphere the process of replacing Greek with Old Church Slavonic was faster than in the cultural one due to the need of translations of liturgical and other books.



supported by the Bulgarian rulers and institutionalized after the conversion of the Bulgarians in 864. Xrabr's arguments and method clearly show his intention to promote a theory of the development of Slavic literacy in contrast to the Greek one, with two main points: the creation of the alphabet and the translation of the Holy Scripture.<sup>23</sup> Pursuing this strategy, he constructed his ideas placing them in a certain historical<sup>24</sup> and biblical paradigm,<sup>25</sup> since this way the structure of the treatise supported his intentions.

An interesting example of thematic correspondence with this model is an apocryphal narrative from the eleventh century entitled *Слово Кырила философа како оубри Боугаре* (Cyril the Philosopher's Narrative on How He Baptized the Bulgarians), the passage in question being: И видѣхъ голѣба глабѣлющи, въ оустѣ<sup>х</sup> ношаше зворѣкъ съици скокине соупоуахъ свезаноу, и врьже мнѣ на крило, и прѣчута<sup>х</sup> ихъ, и обрѣто<sup>х</sup> всехъ лѣ и вложихъ и<sup>х</sup> въ пазоухоу, несо<sup>х</sup> митрополитѣ. Тогда шни въ тело мое съкрише се, и азъ истрѣвихъ грѣцки языкъ.<sup>26</sup> It should not be an over-interpretation to explain this passage in terms of competition between the Slavonic and the Greek languages,<sup>27</sup> but unlike Xrabr's treatise, the author of the anonymous narrative does not show high literary and historical competence in this field.

The treatise "*O Pismenex*," on the other hand, draws on such historical data as the *scholia* (commentaries) to the grammars of Dionysius Thrax and Pseudo-Theodosius, Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Graecarum affectionum curatio* and his commentary on the Bible, the *Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν* of Epiphanius of Cyprus, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Historia ecclesiastica*, Clement of Rome's *Recognitiones*, and George the Monk's *Chronica*.<sup>28</sup> Enumerating various Hebrew and Greek

<sup>23</sup> This theory and the fact that this treatise can be found in about 100 copies (Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russian) from the fourteenth up to the nineteenth century explains its importance for the needs of the Slavs for historical and cultural self-understanding and for modeling the image of the people saved through the Divine Word.

<sup>24</sup> See Giorgio Ziffer, "Zur Komposition des Traktats 'Über die Buchstaben' des Mönchs Chrabr," *Die Welt der Slawen* 58 (1995), 69.

<sup>25</sup> The biblical quotations are from the Psalter 116:1, Luke 1:77, 18:27, and 24:45; Paul's Epistles to 2 Tim 2:7, and 1 John 5:20.

<sup>26</sup> "And I saw a pigeon which was carrying a bundle of fig sticks, bound twice. And it threw them in my lap and I read them and found out that they were 32. I slipped them into my bosom and brought them to the metropolitan. Then they hid themselves in my body and I purged the Greek," Jordan Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini iz Makedonija* (Old Bulgarian literary monuments from Macedonia) (Sofia: Dăržavna pečatnica, 1931), 282–3.

<sup>27</sup> The text of the passage is quite ambiguous. I am using the edition of Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini* where he uses the Tikveški copy from the end of the fifteenth century as a basis.

<sup>28</sup> For the study of the possible Greek sources of the treatise see Vatroslav Jagić, *Codex slovenicus rerum grammaticarum* (Saint Petersburg and Berlin, 1896) and chapter 5 of Kuju Kuev, *Černorizec Xrabr* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1967). The information drawn from these Greek sources concerns the origin of the Greek alphabet and the names of its creators, the translations of the Old Testament in Greek (those of the Septuagint,

cultural achievements, these works were likely to have been utilized in the Byzantine school curriculum.<sup>29</sup>

The structure of the treatise "*O Pismenex*" implicitly resembles some of the formal aspects of the Greek *scholia* (commentaries) it uses. Therefore, it can be argued that its initial variant must have been also in the form of *scholia* to a grammatical work, an idea which takes into account the presence of certain edifying and hermeneutic elements in the treatise. This assumption can be supported by the fact that the treatise of Xrabr was included to a great extent in the East Slavonic Primers of a later epoch, from the sixteenth century onwards. In addition, the structure of the treatise, namely, the dialectical form of thesis and antithesis, parallels to a certain extent a question-and-answer form of the teaching discourse used in classical education.

An estimation of this particular method of teaching occurs in an apocryphal work from the eleventh–twelfth century, entitled "A Discourse Which Has Been Derived From the Book Of Genesis: The Words Of Christ, How God Created Everything." This work deals with questions about the origin of literacy and books and obviously resembles the ideological paradigm of Xrabr's treatise as well as its structure.<sup>30</sup> In the apocryphal text the learning experience is described as less useful than asking questions. The latter one parallels the public dialogues between teacher and students in Western scholastic education:

'Tell me what is better—to ask or to learn?'

'The one who learns, is like a flint which stays cold. When you hit it at a stone, it gives sparks, and it is compelled to work. But if you do not force it (the flint) to work, it does not learn. That's why it is better to ask (than to learn).'<sup>31</sup>

The application of this genre in the Latin and the Byzantine teaching tradition reveals its function as an important part of the educational practice whenever some

and those of Aquila and Symmachos), the question about the oldest language, and the origin of the different arts.

<sup>29</sup> Kuev, *Cernorizec Xrabr*, 71. The same hypothesis is raised by N. Skalabalanović, "Vizantijskaja nauka i školy v XI veke" (Byzantine scholarship and schools in the eleventh century), *Xristijanskoe čtenie*, 5–6 (1884), 745.

<sup>30</sup> The quotations are respectively, "To whom did God send first literacy?" "To Adam's son."; "Who invented the Latin book?" "Hunail, Umam, and Ispul"; "Who invented the Greek book?" "Mercurius"; "Who invented the Bulgarian book?" "Cyril the Philosopher." This example shows a creation of a paradigm of known and mythical names. There the name of the Slavonic apostle St. Cyril was not simply placed as an end of this sequence but the epithet "Philosopher" was added which on the one hand refers to his educational background, and on the other hand praises him as worthy of being the inventor of the Bulgarian alphabet.

<sup>31</sup> See the entire text in modern Bulgarian translation in Anisava Miltenova, ed., *Starobălgarska literatura* (Old Bulgarian literature), vol. 5 (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1992), 334–50.



of the seven liberal arts had to be explained in a simple way.<sup>32</sup> In Byzantium this particular method of teaching grammar has been suggested by John Tzetzes in the twelfth century to be practiced at the same time as the *Schulkatechismen*.<sup>33</sup>

The Slavonic grammatical works do not share the characteristics of the Greek and Latin grammatical treatises.<sup>34</sup> The example of Xrabr's work mostly illustrates the importance of the creation of the alphabet as an instrument of learning and enlightenment which can be considered a typical trait of this early stage of Slavonic literacy when no need for a pure grammatical description of the language was recorded. In light of such thoughts the grammatical treatises of *Slavia Orthodoxa* from the period up to the fourteenth century can tentatively be defined as that of "pseudo"-grammatical treatises as far as the Greek and the Latin grammatical tradition is taken as a reference point.

Another Slavonic grammatical work, the Prologue of John the Exarch to the translation of John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa*, makes use of the lexeme *разоумѣ* but not in a sense of "understanding": Да никакоже, братъѣ, не зазирайте, аще кѣде ѡбратиште не истинъ глѣ, невоиѣ разоумѣ емоѡ юсть положенѣ тождествоуиѣ (Therefore, brothers, do not be dainty about finding somewhere not the same word, because the same meaning (*разоумѣ*) has been put in it).<sup>35</sup> The use of *разоумѣ* here designates a different meaning and exhibits another approach to the Written Word not present in Xrabr's treatise, namely the creation of a translation theory not based on the "word-for-word" rendering, but on "meaning" (*разоумѣ*). The focal point in this theory is that since each word has different connotations, the translators could not rely only on its literal meaning. Such a theory was not an invention of John the Exarch, although he applied it for the first time to Old Church Slavonic; rather, it had been explored much earlier in the works of two Antiochian

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the text of one such example in the form of a dialogue on grammar in V.G.Bezrogoва and O.I. Var'jaš, eds., *Antologija pedagogičeskoj mysli xristijanskogo srednovekov'ja* (Anthology of the educational ideas of the Christian Middle Ages) (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1994), 366 ff.

<sup>33</sup> See Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, 581.

<sup>34</sup> The grammars of Donatus are not attested in South Slavonic milieu, they were translated in Russia in the sixteenth century, as well as in the *Slavia Romana*, also in the sixteenth century, see Dean Worth, *The Origins of Russian Grammar: Notes on the State of Russian Philology Before the Advent of Printed Grammars* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1983); and Sylvie Archaimbault, "Tradicija Donata i grammatiki slavjanskix jazykov" (The tradition of Donatus and the Slavonic grammars), *Revue des Études Slaves* 1 (1998): 17–25.

<sup>35</sup> The text is quoted after the critical edition of Прологъ сътворенъ иваномъ презвѣстѣмъ ексархомъ бѣларьскымъ (A Prologue to John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa*). In *Des Hl. Johannes von Damaskus' Ἐκθεσις ἀκριβῆς τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως in der Übersetzung des Exarchen Johannes*, ed. Linda Sadnik, (Wiesbaden, 1967), 19–20.

scholars, Theodore, the bishop of Mopsuestia, and Diodorus of Tarsus.<sup>36</sup> There is a similar reference in one of the Epistles of St. Basil,<sup>37</sup> asserting that a word-for-word translation of Holy Scripture is not substantial and that a good translation can denote the signifier without necessarily rendering the literal meaning of the Jewish word. A particular passage of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite which was translated by John the Exarch was also viewed as authoritative on this topic.<sup>38</sup> It is certain that Basil's and Dionysius' works were known by the bookmen from the Preslav circle,<sup>39</sup> and by using them, the Slavonic *litterati* recognized not just a simple theory of translation but one at the center of which is the concept of "understanding the meaning." This theory can also be found in a grammatical fragment, the Macedonian Cyrillic Folium: "не во сжть ны на потрѣбѣ глаголи ти и словеса нь разоумь and also разоума сѧ не отъпоуштажшѣ иньнь глагольнь положихъль."<sup>40</sup> The fact that such a theory of translation exists in this early period indicates a certain level of trained (qualified) clergy willing to deal with semantics of the word.

The creation of this theory can be perceived as a natural continuation of the first stage of the Slavonic literacy—the invention of the alphabet. Its appearance in the educational discourse (in the sense of "enlightenment") articulates its purpose, namely, the establishment of a corpus of writings for the newly enlightened people, the Slavs. This corpus, apart from the purely liturgical works, includes translations of various genres and functions:

1. Monastic (edifying) works: *Sacra Parallela*, *Pandecta scripturae sacrae Antiochii Monachi*, John Climacus' *Scala Paradisi*, *Historia monachorum cum excerptis e Historia Lausiaca*, *Apophthegmata patrum*, John Moschos' *Pratum*

<sup>36</sup> According to them, "a word has a semantic field difficult to be reproduced by a single word in another language," see Nigel Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London-Cambridge, MA: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1996), 30.

<sup>37</sup> It is the First Epistle to Bishop Amphilochius in 374, Canon 15, see it in Ivan Stefanov, ed., *Pravila na Svetata Pravoslavna cǎrkva* (Canons of the Holy Orthodox Church) (Sofia: T.T. Dragiev i s-ie, 1930), 27.

<sup>38</sup> See the passage from Pseudo-Dionysius in the *Prologue* of Exarch: "Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ ἄλογον, ὥς οἶμαι, καὶ σκαιὸν τὸ μὴ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ σκοποῦ προσέχειν, ἀλλὰ ταῖς λέξεσι, Sadnik, *Des Hl. Johannes von Damaskus*, 21.

<sup>39</sup> This circle is thought to be formed in the court of Tsar Symeon in Preslav in the tenth century and to be the promoter of Preslav literary school.

<sup>40</sup> Because we do not need the mere words but the meaning," and "in order not to give up the meaning, we put another word." The problems of dating and attribution of the Macedonian Cyrillic Folium are discussed by Ivan Dobrev, "Šadārža li Makedonskijat kirilski list otkas ot proizvedenie na Konstantin Filosof-Kiril za prevodačeskoto izkustvo?" (Does the Macedonian Cyrillic folium contain a part of a work of Constantine the Philosopher-Cyril about the art of translation?), *Starobǎlgarska literatura* 9 (1981): 20–32, where the author lists some opinions about the authorship of the text. I am using the text which was edited and commented upon by Angelina Minčeva, *Starobǎlgarski kirilski otkāsleci* (Old Bulgarian Cyrillic fragments) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1978), 77–81.



- spirituale*, the *Protopaterikon Scaligeri*, Ephraim the Syrian's *Parainesis*, as well as works of Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Isaac of Antioch, Theodore Studite;
2. Historical works: Nichephorus' *Breviarium*, George Syncellus' and George the Monk's *Chronica*;
  3. *Florilegia*: with the famous examples of the *Izborniki* of 1073 and of 1076;
  4. Pseudo-scientific works: Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Topographia christiana*, the *Physiologos*, the *Hexaemeron*, Pseudo-Caesarius' *Dialogi*, a treatise on logic by Theodore of Rhaithou, an astrological treatise about the months, attributed to John of Damascus.<sup>41</sup> It is very plausible that these works were used for edification and as examples of Christian versus classical (pagan) science;
  5. Legal texts: *Nomocanon*, *Lex iudicialis de laicis*.

Apparently, the rich Christian culture was acquired not through the contemporary Byzantine works but through those of the patristic period. The translations and literary culture of the South Slavs at this time were connected with the absorption of Christianity in all its aspects simultaneously which had mainly edifying purposes. An indication for these are the translations and compilations from the works of Early Church Fathers (fourth to sixth centuries) not in their original image, but adapted and in the form of excerpts which were easier for understanding and memorization.<sup>42</sup> Certainly, one has to take into account the role of the *Typikon* that necessitated the use of certain readings on a certain date.<sup>43</sup>

The institutionalization and justification of the Slavonic translation activity was accomplished by Tsar Symeon's commission of the *Izbornik* of 1073: *повелѣ лихъ прѣвѣнѣу сътворити рѣчи, инако на бѣдѣаште тождѣство разума его.* (commanded me to make the change of the language while preserving in another way the identity of his thoughts).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> These treatises are included in the *Izbornik* of 1073. Their function for the Slavonic literacy is described by Ihor Ševčenko, "Pseudo-Scientific Literature among the Orthodox Slavs," *Slavonic and East European Review* 59 (1981), 333: "They gave the tenth-century Bulgarian reader access to introductory material on Aristotelian philosophy and rudimentary astronomy."

<sup>42</sup> A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 179.

<sup>43</sup> See Francis Thomson, "Continuity of Development of the Bulgarian Culture during the Period of the Byzantine Hegemony and the Slavonic Translations of Works by the Three Cappadocian Fathers," in *Meždunaroden simpozium 1100 godini ot blaženata končina na sv. Metodij*, 140–153 (Sofia: Sinodalno izdatelstvo, 1989), 143. Also Elena Koceva, "Cerkovnye ustavy i izučenie slavjanskye rukopisej X–XIV v." (The Church *typika* and the study of the Slavonic manuscripts from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries), *Polata knigopis'naja* 13 (1985): 44–50.

<sup>44</sup> The translation follows Francis Thomson, "The Symeonian Florilegium—Problems of Its Origin, Content, Textology and Edition, together with an English Translation of the Eulogy of Tsar Symeon" *Paleobulgarica*

Apparently, there were certain people, mainly in the court and among the higher clergy in the monasteries, who did have the ability to read and understand highly theological works and most probably they would have read them in Greek instead of translating them. However, a corpus of translations did exist, adjusted to the needs of a provincial scriptorium, the main purpose of this corpus being most likely to edify the faithful and to open their eyes to the Word of God.

### Mastering the Word

The growth in knowledge and faith in the South Slavic culture can be aptly perceived through two concepts overt in the early Church Slavonic literature. The concepts of *знаніє* (γνώσις) and *мѣдростѣ* (φρόνημα, φρόνησις, σοφία) used in one and the same semantic register reveal the yearning for knowledge of the Divine Will. The relationship of faith and knowledge is presented in a quite similar way in the writings of St. Augustine where mastering the meaning of the Scripture as the repository of Christian wisdom was viewed as based on faith and the love of God.<sup>45</sup>

The particular case of *catechumens* instructed in Christian faith and morality through proper examples from the books illustrates a relationship between growing in faith and learning.<sup>46</sup> The authority to regulate this practice was the Orthodox Church whose Canons instructed all bishops to teach the principles of piety through the selection of arguments for the Truth from the Holy Scripture.<sup>47</sup> Teaching through preaching<sup>48</sup> must have been the appropriate and easy way to educate the “illiterate” and the “ignorant” in the Christian faith. The Orthodox Church credited the clergy with teaching duties since these duties originated from the very nature of priesthood.<sup>49</sup> In this respect, the examples from the Latin West point also to the

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1 (1993), 51–2. Although here *разсужанѣ* is rendered as “thought,” the general idea is that the translator should adhere to the “meaning” of the thoughts not to their form.

<sup>45</sup> See H. de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 1, *University in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 308.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Joseph A. Munitiz, “Catechetical Teaching-aids in Byzantium,” in *Καθηγητρία, Essays Presented to Joan Hussey for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday* (Camberley, Surrey: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 69–83. In this article Munitiz suggests to observe *Sacra Parallela* as a teaching device for teaching the catechumens the Christian virtues and vices. For a similar practice in the Barbarian West and the practice of memorization, see Riché, *Education and Culture*, 480.

<sup>47</sup> The Canon 19 of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

<sup>48</sup> See the Canon 10 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and also Canon 19 of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, “It obliges those who preside over the churches, every day but especially on the Lord’s days, to teach all the clergy and the people words of piety and of right religion, excerpted from Holy Scripture meditations and determinations of the truth, and not going beyond the limits now fixed, nor varying from the tradition of the God-bearing fathers,” *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, ed. Henry R. Percival, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 374.

<sup>49</sup> Canon 10 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.



practice of teaching the alphabet and the Christian virtues simultaneously in the monastic, episcopal, and parish schools.<sup>50</sup>

The semantic field of the word “ουγυητελѣ” (teacher) in Old Church Slavonic renders in general that of the Greek word διδάσκαλος but with one additional designation. In the Slavic world immediately after the creation of the alphabet the word “ουγυητελѣ” became a *topos* reserved predominantly for Cyril and Methodius and their apostolic activity.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it reflected both the spirituality (αποστολѣство) and the pragmatics of their educational activity (ουγυητελѣство) among the Slavs. Later on, the word was applied to the semantics of the images of St. Clement and St. Naum as disciples of Cyril and Methodius and as teachers themselves.

St. Clement's teaching activity along with his other skills are at the center of the narrative in his *Vita*: γράφων καὶ τοῖς παισὶ τῶν μαθημάτων τι ὑφηγούμενος (he was writing and teaching the children some knowledge).<sup>52</sup> He was called a “new Paul for the new Corinthians—the Bulgarians,”<sup>53</sup> thus, reactualizing the apostolic *ideologema* of teaching and preaching God's Word. Part of his teaching activity was to find disciples to whom to transmit his knowledge and whom to prepare as his successors: καθ' ἐκάστην δὲ ἐνορίαν τριακοσίοις μαθηταῖς εὐθυνεῖτο (he was helped in each enorios by 300 pupils).<sup>54</sup> The method of teaching Clement undertook probably implied less advanced students to be taught by more advanced,<sup>55</sup> as it was also a practice in Byzantium.<sup>56</sup> Such a method could be assumed also on the basis of the reported number of students (3500) under St. Clement's supervision, “Ἐχων δὲ τινὰς ἐκλελεγμένους τῶν ἄλλων ... εἰς τρισχιλίους γὰρ καὶ πεντακοσίους ἡριθμοῦντο (He had in each enorios (some) chosen people and they were not few, their number was 3500),<sup>57</sup> although some scholars consider this number a *topos*.

<sup>50</sup> Robert E. Lerner, “Literacy and Learning,” in *One Thousand Years: Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen, (Boston and Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 175.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the text of the *Alphabetical Prayer, Eulogy for Saint Cyril by Clement of Oxrid*, etc.

<sup>52</sup> The text has been edited and commented upon by Milev, *Grăckite žitija*, 126.

<sup>53</sup> Milev, *Grăckite žitija*, 133.

<sup>54</sup> Milev, *Grăckite žitija*, 126.

<sup>55</sup> The division of the students according to their skills and diligence is clear also in the passage ποιοῦνται δὲ σπουδὴν τοῖς ὀξυτέροις τῶν μαθητῶν παραδοῦναι τὰ θεῖα μαθήματα (and they (SS. Cyril and Methodius) took care of transmitting the Divine knowledge to the more skillful of their students) which refers to Cyril and Methodius' teaching activity, see Milev, *Grăckite žitija*, 80.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin: notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture: Byzance des origines au X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 291, gives as an example the teaching practice of an anonymous Byzantine teacher from the tenth century. In the West there were also many cases like this, see Riché, *Education and Culture*, 476.

<sup>57</sup> Milev, *Grăckite žitija*, 126.

The teaching activity of Clement and Naum could be perceived as training in primary literacy together with instructing in Christian faith through sermons and moral examples. However, it is too much to presume here a “large monastic school which was developed into a kind of university center, the first educational institution of such kind in the Balkans,”<sup>58</sup> assuming this only on the basis of few textual and archeological data. Certainly, the activity of Clement and Naum was institutionalized by the cultural policy of Prince Boris and Tsar Symeon but it is hard to define what was the exact scope of this activity and whether it fulfilled the intentions of its initiators.

The preaching activity of the new Slavic apostles also required the creation of rhetorical discourses, homilies, and sermons, which had the task to express the meaning of the Scriptures without oversimplification and still comprehensible for the new Christians. Certain rhetorical skills, therefore, must have been required in order to translate well and to compose original sermons in a new language. The rhetorical skills and knowledge must have been gained primarily from the examples of the Church Fathers’ homiletic literature because rhetoric as a part of the *trivium* was not known in the Slavic world either in this early epoch or later. The only example concerning direct instructions in rhetoric is the Slavonic translation of the treatise of the Byzantine teacher George Choeroboscus “Ο οβραζ’κχ’” (On the tropes).<sup>59</sup> This work contains a list of tropes and figures, together with examples for each of them taken from Homer, the Psalter, and the Gospels. One hypothesis is that it had probably been included in the original Greek copy of the miscellany which the Slavonic translator must have had as a prototype.<sup>60</sup> If we accept the opinion that the *Izbornik* is an entire translation from a Greek miscellany, the conclusion then will be that the Slavonic translator in all likelihood translated everything which was included in this miscellany.<sup>61</sup> If not, then why had this particular treatise been chosen for translation?<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> This is a suggestion of G. Pop-Atanasov, I. Velez, and M. Jakimovska-Tošić, *Skriptorski centri vo srednovekovna Makedonija* (Scriptorial centres in medieval Macedonia) (Skopje: Filosofski fakultet, 1997), 287. The same point of view is supported by Georgi Čavřakov, *Središta na bālgarskata knižovnost: 9–18 vek* (Centres of Bulgarian book learning: ninth to eighteenth centuries) (Sofia: Narodna prosveta, 1987), 34.

<sup>59</sup> The text is edited by Angelina Minčeva and Rumjana Pavlova, *Simeonov sbornik: po Svetoslavovija prepis ot 1073* (Tsar Symeon Florilegium following the Svjatoslavov copy from 1073), vol. 1 (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1991), 668–74. A critique of some of the papers in this edition is the article of Thomson, “The Symeonian Florilegium,” 37–53.

<sup>60</sup> There is a debate whether this *florilegium* was possibly translated from one complete Greek *florilegium* or it was a compilation on Bulgarian soil according to the needs of the Preslav *litterati*. For the first point of view see Ihor Ševčenko’s article, “Pseudo-Scientific Literature,” especially 332. The second opinion is held by Francis Thomson in the article “The Symeonian Florilegium.”

<sup>61</sup> Elena Velkovska, “Traktatāt na Georgi Xirovosk *Za tropite*, negovijat slavjanski prevod i vizantijskata ritoričeska tradicija” (The treatise of George Choeroboscus Περὶ τρόπων, its translation into Slavonic, and



What is still unclear is the function of this treatise in the Slavonic milieu. Its content and structure reveal certain educational and edifying purposes which correspond with the utilitarian character of learning in early Slavia Orthodoxa when the "curriculum" was subordinated to the correct understanding of Holy Writ.<sup>63</sup> However, this treatise shows signs of a higher literary culture, which were omitted by the Slavonic translator.

### ПОУЧИТАНІЮ И ПОСЛУШАНИЮ КНИЖНОЮ (Reading and listening to the Book)

Apparently, the edifying works were of great importance for the new Christians, the Bulgarians, and especially for the monastic communities where the spiritual life required extensive practice. One way of acquiring this was reading, both privately and collectively. The presence of the motif of "reading books" in certain exhortations on reading, most of them compiled in Slavonic communities, unveils its role for educating the "illiterate" in Christian virtues and for telling where to look for these virtues.

The earliest attested discourses on reading are of parainetic genre, compiled from Biblical and patristic examples. The moral instructions are spirited by the use of Psalter verses and authorized by the names of the Church Fathers. Beside their value as catechetical means these instructions provide data for the literary communication in a society where knowledge of books meant "salvation."<sup>64</sup> The relationships of the three discourses on reading regard their origin, as well as their

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the Byzantine rhetorical tradition), *Starobălgarska literatura* 19 (1985), 83. However, another Bulgarian scholar, Ivan Bujukliev, does not agree with such an opinion because "the availability of a small number of copies of this text is not a reason for claiming such an attitude by the Slavonic translator"; critical commentary and analyses of the quality of the translation are provided in the chapter about Choeroboscus' treatise in Ivan Bujukliev, "Bălgarskijat prevod na Περὶ τρόπων (O obrazjax) ot Georgi Xirovosk" (The Bulgarian translation of George Choeroboscus' Περὶ τρόπων), in his book *Ezikovata kultura na bălgarskoto Srednovekovie* (The linguistic culture of the Bulgarian Middle Ages) (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sveti Kliment Ohridski", 1992).

<sup>62</sup> The opinion of Elena Velkovska is that this treatise must have been difficult to understand by the medieval readers due to the incomprehensibility of the Greek texts and to unfamiliarity with the ancient and Byzantine rhetorics of the Slavonic translator, see Velkovska, "Traktatăt," 82–3. The author also goes into the question of the function of this text in the newly baptized Slavonic world and reaches the conclusion that the main principles of classical rhetoric are not requisite for the Slavs. Nevertheless, the list of tropes and figures is applicable to every type of text.

<sup>63</sup> In this case not only the Bible but also the writings of the early Church Fathers which were very popular in the initial period of the Slavonic translations.

<sup>64</sup> See here the ascertainment of Margaret Mullett, "Writing in Early Medieval Byzantium," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5, that "the functions of literacy need to be established in relation to a particular society's needs."

textual and formal features.<sup>65</sup> The texts focus on *поуитанье книжное* (reading the Book)<sup>66</sup> as a process of enlightenment of the mind (*оумъ*).<sup>67</sup> The variation within this main model affects the pragmatics and the semantics of reading which reflected probably upon a monastic community.

Reading is phrased in the axiologic paradigm of “benefit” (*по́лза*) and “good deed” (*добро*) in the first discourse, entitled *Григоріа папы римскаго о почитаніи книжнѣм слово* (Gregory’s Discourse on Reading the Scripture).<sup>68</sup> It is articulated in an imperative short-sentenced form which is a distinctive feature of the whole text. This form implies certain characteristics of an oral discourse, namely, reading aloud. Such type of reading was practiced mainly in monastic communities which had to be instructed in Christian ethics through proper examples from the Scripture.<sup>69</sup> Listening is also discernible as “benefit” (*по́лза*) with the punishment of “living in ignorance” (*безвѣстно жити*) if somebody is not “listening to the Scripture” (*слышаще оумене*). The verbs *слышати* (listen) and *слоушати* (give heed) could be associated with the semantics of *προσέχω* and especially with its liturgical connotations.<sup>70</sup> Thus, reading and listening can be perceived as a learning experience for the monastic community in a way that the act of reading recapitulates an experience of listening to the Word of God.<sup>71</sup> A compilation which prefaced a miscellany, the analyzed discourse teaches its readers how to contemplate upon the Scripture.

The second discourse on reading is a translation from Greek, and can be attributed either to John Chrysostom or to Ephraim the Syrian: — *Слово свѣаго Ивана Златоустаго о томъ, како подобаетъ чытении послоншати и вѣнниати* (John

<sup>65</sup> Cf. the article of William Veder, “Three Old Slavic Discourses on Reading,” in *Studia slavica mediaevalia et humanistica Riccardo Picchio dicata*, vol. 2, ed. H. Goldblatt, (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1986), 721. The texts will be quoted according to Veder’s publication, 722–6.

<sup>66</sup> The word *поуитанье* out of context can be translated with “reading,” “veneration,” and “observation” of the books, cf. A. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevnerusskago jazyka po pismennym’ pametnikam’* (Materials for a lexicon of Old Russian language on the basis of literary monuments) (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1956).

<sup>67</sup> *Stoudios Typikon* also documents such activity, see chapters 26, 28, 33, 36 on reading.

<sup>68</sup> The translations of the discourses’ titles are made by W. Veder, “Three Slavic Discourses.” The translations of the texts are mine.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. also chapter 28 of the *Stoudios Typikon*, “When the brothers come down for the midday meal, they should carry a verse [of the psalm] on their lips. A reading then takes place.”

<sup>70</sup> See the meaning of this word in connection with the part of the office before reading the lessons, attested in John Chrysostom’s *Homilia in Acta Apostolorum*, *Greek–English Lexicon*, ninth edition, eds. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>71</sup> This is a common feature of both Western and Eastern literate communities, see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 149.



Chrysostom's Discourse on How to Listen and Give Heed to Lecture).<sup>72</sup> One of the manuscripts which contains this discourse is the eleventh-century Moscow copy of the *Pandecta scripturae sacrae Antiochii Monachi* which also includes the alphabetical verse of Gregory Nazianzen (АЛФАВИТАРЬ).<sup>73</sup> This particular alphabetical verse must have served as a lesson in Christian morality in the form of short sayings easy for memorization. The apparent didactic purpose of the *Pandecta* corresponds directly with the function of Chrysostom's discourse: to instruct how to read the Book.

In the discourse the act of reading is viewed as something which necessitates special preparation and actions—opening the inner eyes, being diligent, being patient, being eager. These acts constitute the parameters of monastic pedagogy with spiritual dimensions and pragmatic references. The latter ones were implied in the instructions to the reader to focus on “good reading,” reading with comprehension.

This particular perception of literary activity might be compared with a developed model of literacy from the treatise “On the Letters” by Constantine of Kostenec.<sup>74</sup> In his work Constantine compares two ways of becoming literate—writing and reading. The two inseparable natures (substances) of “writing” as a manifestation of the Divine Idea are the written (orthographical and grammatical form) and the verbal “expression” of “лѣпотѣ” (refinement) as a concept which also can be applied to the relationship between text and reading.<sup>75</sup> Unlike Chrysostom's discourse analyzed above where the model of learning through reading and listening does not account for any grammatical features, the author of the fifteenth-century treatise believes the formal characteristics of the parts of speech are crucial for preserving the orthodoxy of the faith.<sup>76</sup>

The third discourse entitled *Глаголъ некоего каловгера о чьтении книгъ* (Discourse of a Certain Monk on Reading the Scripture) serves as a preface to a miscellany, the *Izbornik* of 1076. The function of the miscellany was probably to be used in a monastic milieu, to instruct in morality and spiritual perfection.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Veder, “Three Slavic Discourses,” 718.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. the edition of the text by J. Popovski in *Polata knjigopisnaja* 23–24 (1989).

<sup>74</sup> This grammatical treatise was written by Constantine of Kostenec in Serbia in the fifteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> See this analysis of Constantine's concept of “literary education” in Elena Koceva, “Edna vāzmožnost za pročít na liturgični tekstove vāz osnova na Rilskite muzikalni pripiski” (Towards a possible interpretation of liturgical texts on the basis of Rila musical inscriptions), *Paleobulgarica* 3 (1987), 35.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Harvey Goldblatt, *Orthodoxy and Orthography: Constantine Kostenecki's Treatise on the Letters* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1987).

<sup>77</sup> B. Angelov, “Za tri sāčinenija v Simeonovite sbornici” (About three writings in Tsar Symeon's miscellanies), *Starobālgarska literatura* 5 (1979), 31.

The use of certain types of miscellanies like the two Slavic *florilegia* known as *Izbornik* of 1073 and *Izbornik* of 1076 in the learning practice is a controversial issue. Some later *florilegia* like a fourteenth-century miscellany were considered to be used in primary education although there is no direct evidence for such an assumption.<sup>78</sup> The same holds true for the early period of the tenth century where it would be quite speculative to discuss the *florilegia* as parts of elementary education especially if their content is to be considered.<sup>79</sup> The principle of their compilation, the so-called “chaotization” principle is an additional factor in understanding their function for the educational process.<sup>80</sup>

From the emergence and distribution of these first Slavonic *florilegia* it is evident that Tsar Symeon did want them to be copied but certainly not for the purposes of primary education. Encyclopedias of practical and theoretical (theological) knowledge, the *florilegia* were perhaps designed for private or collective (monastic) readings, as sources of knowledge and edification.<sup>81</sup> In the Latin West such *florilegia* based on patristic literature were composed by Venerable Bede for his monks.<sup>82</sup>

The discourse focuses on personal reading and comprehension of the Scripture<sup>83</sup>: *югда ѹтѣши книгѹ ... нѣ поразоумѣти, ѹто гла҃хѣтъ книгѹ и словеса та.*<sup>84</sup> The motif of reading with *razoумъ* in order to *porazoумѣти* is the leitmotif that appears in the same semantic paradigm as the one, presented in Xrabr’s treatise, “enlightenment through understanding.” This paradigm has its parallels also in the discourse of John Chrysostom: *отъврѣзи ми оуши и оуи срѣдѹюмѣти оуслышати слово твое и разоумѣти ю.*<sup>85</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See Vasil Gjuzeev, *Učilišta, skriptorii, biblioteki i znanija v Bălgarija prez 13–14 vek* (Schools, scriptoria, libraries, and types of knowledge in Bulgaria in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) (Sofia: Narodna prosveta, 1985), 46. He considers especially *The Questions and Answers of Athanasius of Alexandria* from the Lavrentiev Miscellany of 1348.

<sup>79</sup> It was a compendium of theological, historical, rhetorical, and astronomical works which most probably provided the Slavs with a knowledge of Antiquity experienced through a Christian mentality and vocabulary. The question is whether these pseudo-scientific texts were comprehensible for the readers of the *florilegia*.

<sup>80</sup> See William Veder, “Old Russia’s ‘Intellectual Silence’ Reconsidered,” in *Medieval Russian Culture*, vol. 3, eds. Michael Flier and Daniel Rowland, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 26.

<sup>81</sup> See Munitiz, “Catechetical Teaching-aids,” 77.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Riché, *Education and Culture*, 473. Various anthologies must have been also used as teaching devices in the West to provide knowledge about ancient authors and from the Church Fathers through excerpts from their works rather than through complete texts.

<sup>83</sup> The private reading is attested in the Stoudios *Typikon*, chapter 26: “and the brothers assemble at the book station: each one takes a book and reads it until the evening.”

<sup>84</sup> Veder, “Three Slavic Discourses,” 725: “When you are reading books... do understand what the books and the words are saying.”

<sup>85</sup> Veder, “Three Slavic Discourses,” 724: “Open the eyes and the ears of my heart to hear your word and to understand (comprehend) it.”



The ideal of "good reading" is manifested in the examples of how the Church Fathers were learning: Из млада прилежаахъ стѣхъ книгъ, то же и на добрага дѣла подвижниша сѧ.<sup>86</sup> The relationship between morality and learning is very clear in this case. It explains also the positive attitude of the compiler of the discourse towards книжное оуѣние (booklearning) in the form of reading or learning books.<sup>87</sup> As a rule, the cases when some information about a saint's книжное оуѣние is available are very rare in the early period of Slavonic literature.<sup>88</sup> The paradigmatic example of St. Constantine-Cyril who went to Constantinople and наоуи сѧ Омироу и геометрии и оу Льва и оу Фотиа диалектицѣ и въсѣмъ философскѣмъ оуѣнѣмъ, къ сѧмъ же и риторики и арифметики, астрономии и мусики и въсѣмъ проуѣмъ іериньскѣмъ хъдожьствомъ<sup>89</sup> is the earliest of its type. It specifies very accurately the nature of his education—the seven liberal arts curriculum, a continuation of the pagan tradition, which perhaps was in use in the Constantinopolitan Magnaure School. Nevertheless, this type of learning cannot be found in case of any Slavic saints; and one can only guess the nature of книжное оуѣние (learning from books) of St. Gabriel of Lesnovo: и вившъ лѣта ѡ книжномъ оуѣнѣмъ, и родители егѡ даша оуѣити съ книгъ, и минѡши мало врѣмѧ, всѧ писаніѧ разбѣвѣ, не іединѡмъ пѧзикомъ, но многимъ.<sup>90</sup>

The term книжное оуѣние has been used by Horace Lunt in connection with learning in Kievan Rus' which he views as a process: "the first stage is marked by the new enlightenment brought through baptism; then in the second period the written word has been mastered, and the third stage is the книжное оуѣние, that is ready to be used to profit the souls of the faithful."<sup>91</sup> It is obvious that Lunt uses this

<sup>86</sup> Veder, "Three Slavic Discourses," 726: "From their youth they showed persistence in (learning/reading) the Holy Books, and then they were plunged into good deeds."

<sup>87</sup> Cf. this attitude with the opposite one expressed in the stories about Nikita of Novgorod, Klim Smoljatič, and Avraamij of Smolensk, Simon Franklin, "Booklearning and Bookmen in Kievan Rus': A Survey of an Idea," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/9): 830–48.

<sup>88</sup> There is the example of St. Wenceslas that was given to the clergy кѣ попиноу наоуѣити книгѧмъ оуѣити данъ вѣст (who was given to the clergy to learn the Letters (the Books)), *Vita Wenceslavi*.

<sup>89</sup> The text of the *Vita* is quoted after Stojan Stojanov and Miroslav Janakiev, *Starobălgarski ezik: Tekstove i rečnik* (Old Bulgarian: Texts and dictionary) (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1976), 17, the translation is mine: "And he learnt Homer and geometry and from Leo and Photius - the dialectic and all philosophical learning, and also rhetoric, arithmetic, astronomy and music, and all the other Greek (Hellenic) arts."

<sup>90</sup> The passage is taken from the Life of St. Gabriel of Lesnovo who lived probably in the eleventh century and was an anchorite in the area of Zletovo, Western Bulgaria. The *Vita* narrates that "when he came to the age for learning, his parents gave him to learn (study) books, and after some time, he understood the entire Scripture not only in one language but in many," see the text in Jordan Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini*, 396.

<sup>91</sup> Horace Lunt, "The Language of Rus' in the Eleventh Century" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/89), 294–5. This scholar uses a passage from the *Primary Russian Chronicle* analyzing its metaphorical message about the "plowmen" and the "seed." Simon Franklin, "Booklearning and Bookmen in





The concept of functionality, forming the basics of Slavonic literary culture, was present in the educational process through *abecedaria*, alphabetical acrostics, and *erotapokriseis*, teaching aids which resemble to a certain extent the Byzantine models and reveal the process of memorization through certain techniques. The functional aspect of the Slavonic literacy can also be seen in the situation of bilingualism (Greek and Slavonic language) and in the use of two different graphic systems for rendering the phonetic system of one single language (Glagolitic and Cyrillic script).

Utilizing literacy through reading, writing, and most probably translating and compiling various types of works can be observed as the next stage of the educational process. This stage was based on certain ways of mastering knowledge: reading with diligence and understanding and treating the books as a source of wisdom.

The highest stage of literacy which could be called “*obrazovanost*” (“literary culture”) seemed to be very different from the Byzantine type of university education. This stage suggests the presence of a relatively small number of people—probably in the court or in the monasteries near the capital—who compiled, translated, and wrote works with clearly high literary qualities aimed to reach the audience who shared the same skills and interests. The circle around Tsar Symeon presents such an audience which possessed a high level of education; being familiar with literary culture. These people wrote and read the original Greek texts and produced Slavic ones.

Among these works connected with education, the grammatical treatises have to be mentioned. Clearly, there was no stage in the early Slavic literary tradition similar to Byzantium, for example, which was preoccupied with a systematic learning of grammar. Since grammars and manuals for learning were not available at that stage, the learning practice was subordinated to the need of preparation for understanding the Scripture. The grammatical treatises used certain ideological structures to meet the cultural needs of the Slavs at this historical moment. These were the model of enlightenment through understanding, the apology and panegyric of the alphabet as part of a holy enterprise, and the theory of translation subordinated to the primacy of “meaning.” All these concepts were created on Slavonic soil partly on the basis of Greek models and *ideologemas* but it was their applicability in the Bulgarian cultural space which had imbued them with new connotations.

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